

The Times-Dispatch

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1908.

Campaign Contributions

The Times-Dispatch will receive, acknowledge and forward to the treasurer of the National Democratic Campaign Committee all sums sent it for this purpose.

DEATH BY ELECTRICITY.

The first man to die in Virginia by officially administered electricity met his end at the State penitentiary yesterday. It is a melancholy satisfaction to know that this gruesome punitive engine is in successful operation. Scientific opinion seems agreed that electricity offers the most humane form of execution yet devised. The action of the tremendous voltage switched through the living body is all but instantaneous; insensibility comes so quickly that there is no time for death agonies. As the law's purpose is not to torture the victim, but merely to eliminate him from society, electrical death is as acceptable to jurisprudence as it is strongly preferred by the humanitarian.

"The chair" has another great advantage over the sheriff's noose, in that it is swift, quiet and mysterious. With the negro, who constitutes so large a proportion of the criminal population of all Southern States, this argument is undeniably important. The Times-Dispatch has long contended that the publicity, the excitement and the general hurrah-and-holiday air attending the old-time hanging were a positive affront to the negro. His strong theatrical sense revealed in a final melodrama in which he was the conspicuous central figure. The electric execution wholly does away with that. The time set for turning on the death current is unannounced, the public is rigorously eluded, and the whole affair is conducted with secrecy and mystery, well calculated to inspire terror in the heart of the superstitious African.

Furthermore, by holding the executions within the confines of the State Penitentiary, cities and counties are spared the outlay and the suspense which necessarily attend the safeguarding of a man condemned to death. Also the minds of the young or sensitive are spared the horrible impression which is necessarily produced by more or less public executions in small places.

For these reasons The Times-Dispatch urged and the Legislature enacted the law which was successfully put into operation yesterday.

TIDEWATER TAKES A HAND.

When The Times-Dispatch reopened the oyster question this fall it was apparent that the shortage of the crop could not be remedied this year, and that those who depended upon oysters for their livelihood would not be immediately benefited by discussion; but we believed that the Tidewater section at least could be aroused to the need of dealing in a broad and constructive way with the Virginia oyster problem, and our belief has been abundantly justified by the results. The Newport News Times-Herald has taken up the question, and says: "The situation is alarming. The oystermen are industriously at work, but they are not able to take enough oysters in the opening of the season to pay themselves wages because the oysters are not there to take," and concludes that "the State may well consider the advisability of prohibiting all dredging for two years until nature has replenished the stock in her own way."

The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch states a fundamental and essential fact in considering this problem when it says: "The fact is that the legislators in Virginia have always been influenced by the Tidewater members, who in most cases owe their election to the tongers, and consequently the State has been much much depleted and the seed oyster supply well-nigh exhausted." Without making any definite suggestions, the Ledger-Dispatch believes that the discussion will benefit the people of the State at large by illuminating a condition that has arisen largely through ignorance.

The Newport News Press is also taking up this problem, and adds its testimony to those who have deplored the smallness of the crop. Among other facts, the Newport News Press states that 125 oystermen, manning forty-four boats, left James River because they could not get a living from the rocks, and concludes, "The impression is growing that a commission of fisheries ought to know about fish and oysters, and knowing, act." * * * If the salaries of the Commission of Fisheries are not adequate let them be fixed at a proper figure and permit the legislature to give its attention to the enactment of remedial legislation rather than to doubling the pay of the officials.

The Norfolk Landmark and the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot are also paying attention to a business which supports thousands of citizens in this section.

So far no definite plan of action has been evolved, but the people of Virginia may rest assured that the great natural oyster bottoms of this State will ultimately be administered at least as well as those of Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey. In the meantime, for lack of proper laws for furnishing sufficient quantities of seed, the tongers and planters alike are suffering in one common calamity. For when the seed crop fails, whether in wheat or oysters, the employers or employees who depend on the ripened crop for subsistence suffer together.

DEMOCRATIC CHANCES IMPROVING.
Yesterday's New York World reported that Mr. Taft had met with a very chilly reception in the manufacturing towns of Ohio; at the same time Mr. Bryan was receiving an ovation in the debatable State of Nebraska.

The straw votes taken in Connecticut also show that Mr. Bryan has gained strength in that one-time Democratic State, and so far as the indications go the prospects are continually improving for the Democrats. The silent vote naturally is not in evidence; does not stand up to be counted at mass meetings or political rallies, simply because it is silent; but some idea of how the public is thinking may be gathered from the fact that partisan Republican papers throughout the country are not screaming that despair and destruction will follow Mr. Bryan's election, and those that do are not heeded. If this campaign has done nothing else, it has developed the remarkable vitality of the Democratic party, and though it is possibly true that some one-time Democrats are going to vote the Republican ticket, yet there are a far greater number of old Democrats who have returned to the fold, and there is no measuring the strength or the number of those mugwumps who can see no better way of rebuking Mr. Roosevelt's dictatorship than to vote the Democratic ticket. The simple fact is that there are in this country an enormous number of people who are constitutionally and by inheritance Democrats. Such Democrats may not accept all the tenets of the advance guard of their own party, but they profoundly distrust and object to the sort of administration that the Republican party has given this country for the last twelve years. Indications are that the force and strength to that objection will amount those who cheerfully bet ten to one on Mr. Taft three months ago.

AGAIN A BROKEN FLUME.
Relentless misfortune still pursues the settling basin project. Completed over a year ago, the great reservoirs of clear water remain as little use to Richmond as the icebergs of Greenland are to the Desert of Sahara, and for exactly the same reason—lack of transportation facilities. In Richmond's case, however, the distance to be covered is not great, and the engineering difficulties ought to be simple. Yet the concrete flume bursts time and time again. Each time the public has been assured that the leaks have at last been thoroughly repaired, only to find when the test comes that some one has blundered.

From the recurrence of breaks in the flume it is evident that either the plan is faulty or that the work has been done in a most inferior manner. Repeated failures of the flume to perform its function forcibly suggest the wisdom of investigating first whether the scheme was feasible in the first instance under the plans and specifications provided by the Superintendent of the Water Works, and next whether these plans and specifications have been followed. It is understood that City Engineer Bolling will urge this course, and his suggestion should be adopted and followed.

When the defect has been discovered, Richmond will at least know how long it will take and at what cost to get clear water in abundant quantities.

Sunny Jim Sherman told a Newark, N. J. audience that Mr. Bryan is "dangerous to the country because he is a Jew." We take it for granted that iron, Sunny Jim is taking care to avoid this particular kind of dangerousness.

The accident to the "A. Holland Forbes" balloon is said to have been caused by the length of the appendix. We suppose Mr. Forbes's experience will at once start all other aeronauts to operating their balloons for appendicitis.

Chairman Hitchcock declares that Mr. Taft will carry both Ohio and Indiana. Chairman Hitchcock evidently knows the man who has been an uncommon carrier of unlimited capacity.

Uncle Joe Cannon has just sold \$45,000 worth of Nebraska farm lands for needed pork. As Mr. Bryan has been pointed out, Hon. Cannon does not necessarily rely on Speaking-of-the-House for a living.

The Methodist Church has just called a Pittsburg banker to an Oregon bishopric, doubtless thinking the place should go to a man who had grappled with sin at its sinniest.

During the taxicab strike many of New York's actors, men of letters, etc., will go to and from on the street cars, as usual.

Hardly any power is so exalted that it does not bend the knee to a higher one. Where there's a Caesar, there's usually a Czarina.

The frantic struggles of the Detroit Tigers merely accentuate the fact that the season is over.

A balloon containing two persons fell 4,000 feet. Cost of living please write.

"Gompers' Strike Out," says a headline. Yet the Republican party claims that he fouled.

E. H. Hartman is a clergyman's son, but that doesn't necessarily prove anything.

Even a Balkan war cloud may have a silver lining.

Colonel Stewart's own ways, however, were not retreating.

As for the war talk, it has hit the

Rhymes for To-Day.

THE TROUBLE WITH OCTOBER.

OCTOBER, how you make a man's heart soften
And his blood to circulating fast!
I love you, and I'd sing you much
If I dared.

Your skies as sweet as any philharmonic,
Your suns more bright than any tonic
Your suns more like a grand rocco tonic
For the nerves—

Your spiky hints of mirthballs and of camphor,
Your prophecies of warm balbriggan
October, you're a pippin, and I am for you
You always.

And yet, dear Oct., 'tis my reluctant practice
To pass you by, ignore you every time
I hate to do it, dearie, but the fact is
You won't rhyme.

You've got just 'Job or' 'Leob or' good
old 'sober'—
Oh, won't you get some others pretty soon?
What joy, if you had many rhymes,
October.

Like sweet June! H. S. H.

MERELY JOKING.

Losing Hope.
"You'll wake up some day and find yourself alone," said a pessimist.

"Well, I dunno. I've been going out early for the morning papers for a long time now."—Pittsburg Post.

Should Have.
A friend made a hit at the literary club.

"I guess he did. He pronounced 'Les Miserables' in a bracketed way, and from all I could hear, Victor Herbert's masterpiece."—Houston Chronicle.

Needed a Business Training.
Father: "So you want to attend a business college?"

Son: "Yes, sir; I want to learn how to get more money out of you."—New York Sun.

By Way of Variety.
"I get tired of the old poems."

"I wish Maud Muller would tell the krel of parting day, for instance, and let the soldier of Algiers brag down-mouthed about the conquest of the city of the sea."—Houston Chronicle.

His Method.
Sandy Piker: "Say, pard, tell me how it is that you get such rich hand-outs of pie and beefsteak at every party you tackle?"

"Well, I dunno. I've been going out early for the morning papers for a long time now."—Houston Chronicle.

For Sparks.
"What sort of a girl did he marry?"

"The most forward girl you ever heard of."

"How's that?"

"Why, when they started off in their auto after the ceremony there was the usual shower of rice and old shoes, and a broad-based slipper landed right in her lap, and what do you suppose she did with it?"

"Gave it up."

"She bent over and put it in her suitcase with the remark that it might come in handy after awhile."—Houston Post.

THE PARAGRAPHERS' VIEWPOINT.

The construction of the official Thanksgiving day celebration will be as usual, unless "after the election," we fancy.—Washington Herald.

Other things being equal, a cook prefers a place where she can break the most dishes with the least exertion.—Dallas News.

Plans are being made to form a \$50,000-estimated combination. But, perhaps, this is one of the big things which await upon the election of Mr. Taft.—Rochester Herald.

The most excited partisan does not charge Hon. C. W. Fairbanks with having headed the "Houder" in the campaign.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

"This is the golden age of politics," says Mr. Depue. But Hitchcock and Mack don't think so, we guess.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

The ladies of the Houston cooking society are considerably disturbed lest their unspeakable Bill Skillet sausage for President Bryan on the morning of the election will be as inedible as the Walker county sausage of Texas.—Houston Post.

"May it not be possible," suggests the Chicago Tribune, "that Laureate Alf Austin's poetry is really better than that of the laureates of England?" (1) were than it sounds; (2) as good as it sounds; (3) or better than it sounds; (4) as good as it sounds; (5) or better than it sounds; (6) as good as it sounds; (7) or better than it sounds; (8) as good as it sounds; (9) or better than it sounds; (10) as good as it sounds.

One writer calculates that Americans this year have spent \$7,500,000 in London. At the rate of the largest city in the world, the average bill has been \$250.

Ten thousand pairs of shoes are produced every day in America. Every day, every twenty-four hours it uses the hides and skins of 7,800 kids, 200 horses and colts, 200 calves and 400 steers.

Americans and Germans have been enabled to overwhelm the French builders to such an extent that the latter are practically bankrupt.

Michael McKenna, of York Harbor, Me., has three sons—Thomas, born on February 28, 1904; John, born on February 28, 1905; and Arthur, born on February 28, 1907.

The birthday present problem is a good deal harder to solve than the problem of the day.

The railways of Great Britain have 16,500,277,994 paid up capital.

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